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Otto John, Martin Bormann, Adolf Hitler, Wilhelm Canaris, Richard Gehlen

A 'Traitor' Speaks

By OTTO JOHN

KATZENELBOGEN, West Germany—As a "traitor" who was once "unmasked" by Herr Richard Gehlen, the retired German intelligence chief, I would like to say something about Herr Gehlen's memoirs, already published in West Germany and soon to be published in "unexpurgated" form in the United States.

I was the head of West German counterespionage in July, 1954, when I was abducted from West Berlin by the Soviet K.G.B. That action by the Soviet intelligence service cleared the way for Herr Gehlen's rise to the top of Dr. Konrad Adenauer's secret service.

At that time Herr Gehlen called me a "traitor." Now, I want to ask the question: Is it not treason to publish in the United States top-secret material banned from publication in West Germany?

What is treason? It depends from which side you look. "Once a traitor, always a traitor," said Gehlen to my superiors in the Bonn Ministry of Interior after I disappeared and surfaced in East Berlin.

Queried as to what he meant, Geh-

len answered that John had committed treason in making contacts with the enemy during the war (which I had done, in fact, on behalf of the resistance against Hitler) and that I, therefore, would commit treason again and again.

I dare to say that I have always remained true to myself. I was a radical opponent of Hitler and fought him, right from the beginning, until I escaped from Berlin to London after the failure of our revolt against Hitler on July 20, 1944. I did not owe any loyalty to Hitler. What about Gehlen?

By the time the Wehrmacht was doomed to unconditional surrender Gehlen had become the most trusted top adviser to Hitler on all intelligence matters concerning Russia. He owed loyalty to Hitler because as an ardent believer he had sworn loyalty to him. He had shared and enjoyed Hitler's political success and military victories. In the midst of defeat, however, he deserted his Führer, as did Göring, Himmler and many others. He defected, taking Hitler's secret intelligence archives to the victorious American Army. If any one was a traitor

according to moral standards of the Wehrmacht, Gehlen was!

Gehlen's memoirs are boosted as bestseller by means of a feeble-minded, fantastic and false statement contending that Martin Bormann, Hitler's deputy, was a Soviet spy.

"Two reliable informations assured me in the fifties," writes Gehlen, "that Martin Bormann was alive in the Soviet Union under perfect cover. The former head of Hitler's Chancery defected to the Soviets whilst the Red Army occupied Berlin. He then lived as adviser to the Soviet Government in Russia where he has died in the meantime."

No competent intelligence researcher has been able to trace these two mysterious sources. I happen to know them. They are former Cavalry Capt. Dietrich von Kuenheim and the writer Guido Röder. They "revealed" the details in a pamphlet, "Soviet Agents Everywhere," called a "Report of the Intelligence of the Russian Emigration," i.e., the White Russian emigration from Czarist Russia, published in 1955. The pamphlet is based on the ideology of the notorious "Protocols of Zion." For such obscure nonsense Gehlen was easy prey.

Gehlen has the face to add much color to what he calls in his memoirs "the revelation of his long-kept secret that conceals the key to the most mysterious case of our century." He pretends that Adm. Wilhelm Canaris, head of Wehrmacht intelligence at the beginning of the Russian campaign, found out that Bormann was a Soviet spy; that Bormann had at his disposal one nonsuspect wireless station by which he communicated to the Soviets the most important secrets of the German Supreme Command. There was never such a wireless station.

I was close to Admiral Canaris in the resistance against Hitler beginning in 1939 and a confidant of his closest advisers. Colonel, later Gen. Hans Oster, his Chief of Staff, and Hans von Dohnanyi, a High Court judge. There was never a hint at Bormann's spy activity for the Soviets.

Dr. Otto John, former chief of counterespionage in West Germany, has spent the years since his release from prison trying to clear his name of treason charges.

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